

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following amended paragraph:

In one embodiment, each backplane link between an ingress interface card and an egress interface card can carry up to 48 STS-1 channels. As mentioned above, in one embodiment, each interface card includes 20 ingress TSIs. Thus, the bandwidth provided by a 20 TSI interface card is 960 STS-1 channels. By changing the number of TSIs and the number of interconnections across the backplane, the number of STS-1 channels supported can be modified. A protocol for use in communicating over the mesh is described in greater detail in U.S. Patent application number 09/745,982, entitled "A BACKPLANE PROTOCOL," filed December 22, 2000, which is assigned to the corporate assignee of the present invention and incorporated by reference. In one embodiment, traffic crosses the mesh, or switching fabric, in an asynchronous manner in that no central clock signal drives data across the mesh. Data is transmitted by the ingress cards without reference to a mesh clock or frame synchronization signal.